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Congress of the United States



House of Representatives

LESTER L. WOLFF, M.C. FAORC
South District, New York

Sept. 23, 1980

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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EA

The Hon. Edmund Muskie
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ed:

As you are aware, I have been discussing with the East Asia Bureau the advisability of pressing ahead with a proposed \$88-million aircraft spare parts sale to the Republic of Korea, given the delicate situation surrounding the Kim Dae Jung case.

It seemed to me, when I first broached this subject to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Armacost last Friday, that U.S. policy would best be served by avoiding an acrimonious public debate at this time on the Administration's Korea policy. This would, I felt, allow the quiet diplomacy which you and I discussed last Wednesday the best chance of gaining time to bear fruit.

Thus, I was disappointed to hear yesterday and today, in conversations with Mr. Armacost, and Assistant Secretary Holbrooke, that the Department has not acted on my suggestion that the 36(b) notice on the \$88-million sale be quietly withdrawn for technical review. As I told Mr. Armacost last week, a number of Members have indicated to me that they will introduce Resolutions of Disapproval on the sale, should such actions become necessary. I have been informed that a letter to you from several of these Members, and others, has been circulated for signature and is on its way to you.

As a result, should the Department continue to insist on the sale, the the acrimonious debate which you indicated you feel would be harmful to U.S. interests would appear to be unavoidable.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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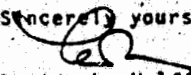
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I hardly think it necessary for me to detail the inappropriate nature of this sale at this time. However, I must comment that I feel few Members can be expected to take seriously the argument that a delay in processing the sale will irretrievably harm U.S. strategic interests on the Korean Peninsula.

In conclusion, I must note that the situation would appear to have been dramatically changed by the strong, public statements of the Government of Japan. It seems to me mandatory that the United States, at the very least, adopt the course I am suggesting, or a similar action at risk of seeming to undercut the Japanese effort, and to abandon Kim Dae Jung and the people of South Korea, to their fate.

Sincerely yours,


Lester L. Wolff
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Asian
and Pacific Affairs

LLW:cn